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RAISED BILL NO. 6544

An Act Simplifying Procedures for Early Care and Early Education Facilities

Testimony to the Committee on Human Services – March 3, 2009

Child and Family Agency of Southeastern Connecticut, a state-licensed child care provider and multi-service behavioral health and social service agency, submits this testimony in favor of Raised Bill No. 6544, "An Act Simplifying Procedures for Early Care and Early Education Facilities".

In the era of growing fiscal challenges for all resources involved in early child care, state agencies and private providers alike, this bill's intention to charge the Departments of Social Services, Education and Public Health with the task of conducting a joint study to make recommendations to simplify procedures and requirements for caregivers comes at an extraordinarily helpful time.

In particular, Child and Family Agency would like to draw attention to the fact that providers of certain after-school programs for school-aged children up to the age of 16 are currently required to maintain the same staff-to-child ratios (1:10) required for pre-school children (ages 3 - Kindergarten). While after-school "drop-in" programs are not required to be licensed as Child Day Care Providers, after-school programs that serve the same registered children and teens on a daily basis must maintain this licensure.

Child and Family Agency encourages the joint committee established under this bill to consider approving more flexible and developmentally appropriate staff-to-child ratios for programs serving school-aged children. While a staff-to-child ratio of 1:10 is certainly prudent and developmentally appropriate for children ages 3 – 6 (the infant/toddler ratio is 1:4), we are confident that the following ratios would be developmentally appropriate for the following age ranges:

ages 7 – 12: recommend a maximum staff-to-child ratio of 1:12

ages 12 – 14: recommend a maximum staff-to-child ratio of 1:16

ages 14 – 16: recommend a maximum staff-to-child ratio of 1:20.

If these revised staff-to-child ratios were adopted, licensed private non-profit child day care providers could provide after-school academic, recreational and social support programs for greater numbers of children and teens without incurring prohibitive increased program costs, while maintaining a responsible, developmentally-appropriate level of supervision.

To this end, Child and Family Agency requests that this testimony be forwarded to the Departments of Social Services, Education and Public Health so that it may be considered as the joint committee to be established under this bill does its work.

Thank you,

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